



Mailing Address

P.O. Box 11247
Berkeley, CA 94712-2247

**Administration
& Member Services**

2344 Sixth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
510.981.4100
fax: 510.981.4191

Health Center Locations

Adult Day Health Center

Foothill Square
10700 MacArthur Blvd, Suite 14A
Oakland, CA 94605
510.563.4390

Berkeley Primary Care

2001 Dwight Way
Room 1363
Berkeley, CA 94704
510.204.4666

**Downtown Oakland Clinic
Supportive Housing Program**

616 16th Street
Oakland, CA 94612
510.451.4270

Howard Daniel Clinic

9933 MacArthur Boulevard
Oakland, CA 94605
510.568.3206

LifeLong Dental Care

1860 Alcatraz Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94703
510.653.8500

**LifeLong Medical Care -
East Oakland**

Foothill Square
10700 MacArthur Blvd, Suite 14B
Oakland, CA 94605
510.615.4870

Marin Adult Day Health Center

1905 Novato Boulevard
Novato, CA 94947
415.897.6884

Over 60 Health Center

3260 Sacramento Street
Berkeley, CA 94702
510.601.6060

West Berkeley Family Practice

2031 Sixth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
510.981.4200

March 10, 2009

Dear Treasurer and Finance Director:

RE: Maintain Medi-Cal Optional Benefits

I am writing to strongly urge you to protect key public health programs that community clinics and health centers rely upon daily in serving California's underserved and uninsured populations. LifeLong Medical Care is the primary care medical home for more than 30,000 patients providing more than 100,000 medically necessary visits including dental, podiatry, psycho-social, acupuncture and optometry. As such, we are counting on the State's continued support to ensure that we can continue to provide the level of care so many individuals in our low-income communities need and deserve.

Having worked in community health for many years, I am particularly concerned with ensuring that the patients we treat have optimal access to services that will keep them healthy.

- Dental services are essential for patients who have chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, etc. because without proper dental treatment, these conditions can worsen.
- Denti-cal for adults ensures that children within these families will also access the medical/dental services that they need. Research shows that use of preventative services for kids decrease when parents do not have access to the same services.
- Denti-cal, in most cases, is the only resource to dental services for our seniors. Seniors, depend on dental services, in most cases more than children and require treatment to their mouth in order to ensure nutrition and therefore the ability to eat and stay alive.
- Lastly, unfortunately, our medical system has long segregated body parts, more so for a financing system. The reality is that the body is all connected and all systems interact with one another, thus optional benefits are really not optional in maintaining quality health care for our patients and our communities.

I respectfully ask you to ensure that we recognize the necessary monies from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to ensure that the State of California continues its commitment toward ensuring everyone has access to basic medical services which includes medi-cal optional benefits, particularly dental.

The primary care and prevention services provided at community clinics save the State far more money over the long haul than any short term savings. If Denti-cal is eliminated, patients will have to seek care in the emergency rooms, which will result in costs 2-3 times more than in a primary care setting. Additionally, these cuts will seriously threaten the viability of many community health centers, which will impact services to children and increase unemployment within our communities.

Again, I thus respectfully ask for your support of community clinics by protecting the programs that matter most to our vulnerable members of society, and in today's times, members of our community who now find themselves without a job and therefore without any medical or dental insurance. At these times, we should be ensuring that the fragile safety net that we have stays in tact.

Sincerely,

Lucinda Brannon Bazile, MPH
Director, Policy & Special Projects